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Human Rights Council
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Agenda item 10
Technical assistance and capacity-building

President's statement

PRST 25/1
Situation of human rights in Haiti

At the fifty-sixth meeting of the Human Rights Council, held on 28 March 2014, the President of the Council made the following statement:

"1. The Human Rights Council expresses its gratitude to the Independent Expert for his report on the situation of human rights in Haiti.[1] It takes note of the latest legal and political developments in Haiti, which have been marked by progress in terms of civil and political rights and of economic, social and cultural rights:

(a) The submission of the initial report of Haiti on the rights of persons with disabilities to the secretariat of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 20 March 2014;

(b) The recent decision of the Port-au-Prince Court of Appeals to order that further enquiries be undertaken in the case of former President for Life Jean-Claude Duvalier;

(c) The deposit, in December 2013, of the instrument of ratification of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption, which will enter into force for Haiti on 1 April 2014;

(d) The opening of an office to combat violence against women and girls on 27 November 2013 and the establishment of a parliamentary gender equity bureau on 2 December 2013;

(e) The establishment of an ad hoc committee to oversee and assess cases of prolonged pretrial detention on 30 October 2013;

(f) The accession, on 8 October 2013, to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which entered into force for Haiti on 8 January 2014;

[1] A/HRC/25/71.

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(g) The implementation of the 400/100 Programme for the construction of 400 social housing units in 100 districts, which was executed with support from the Inter-American Development Bank, and the launch of the first phase of a programme for the construction of 3,000 social housing units on 16 May 2013;

(h) The establishment of the Interministerial Human Rights Committee to coordinate and harmonize public human rights policies.

2. The Council welcomes the signature of the El Rancho Accord on 14 March 2014, which gives voice to the desire of Haitian political actors to move forward with the planning of elections and the consolidation of democracy in Haiti. To that end, the Council also welcomes the publication of the electoral law and the law on political parties, which pave the way for legislative and local elections to be held in late October 2014. The Council encourages the political authorities of Haiti to maintain their spirit of cooperation and to take swift action with a view to scheduling elections;

3. The Council welcomes the reaffirmation of the commitment of the Haitian authorities to improve the living conditions of Haitian women and men by, inter alia, devoting greater attention to respect for human rights. The Council also welcomes the priorities set out in that regard by the President of Haiti (known as the 'five Es' in French): ensuring the rule of law, education, the environment, employment and energy, along with the recent addition of elections to that list. It urges the Government of Haiti to pursue these priorities in a way that will produce concrete, sustainable results for the population of Haiti;

4. Within this context, the Council encourages the Government of Haiti to work to strengthen the rule of law by, inter alia, combating impunity, crime and its causes, and the use of prolonged pretrial detention so as to ensure the operation of public institutions and services and the enjoyment of all human rights;

5. The Council also encourages the Government of Haiti to strengthen national human rights institutions, particularly the Office of Citizen Protection, which the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights accredited with an A status on 4 December 2013 in recognition of its compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles). The Council further encourages the authorities of Haiti to redouble their efforts to strengthen judicial institutions and to make them fully compatible with the commitments made by Haiti in relation to respect for human rights;

6. The Council urges the Government of Haiti to continue to adopt the necessary political and legal measures to safeguard the rights of members of vulnerable groups, including women, children, particularly child domestic workers, and persons with disabilities, to increase women's participation in political affairs and to continue to combat gender-based violence and discrimination;

7. The Council is aware of the many obstacles to development in Haiti and the difficulties which the population of Haiti and its leaders continue to encounter in the aftermath of the earthquake of 12 January 2010. It recognizes that families whose members were separated by the earthquake, including unaccompanied children and displaced persons in camps and outside the scope of the main rescue operations, are more vulnerable to human rights violations and that the full enjoyment of civil and political, economic, social and cultural human rights constitutes a factor in peace, stability and development in Haiti;

8. The Council encourages the international community as a whole and, in particular, international donors, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, the group of countries known as the Friends of Haiti, specialized agencies of the United Nations and, in particular, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to step up their cooperation with the Haitian authorities with a view to the full realization of all human rights in Haiti;

9. The Council welcomes and approves the request of the Haitian authorities for a one-year extension of the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti, which concerns technical assistance and capacity-building;

10. The Council encourages the Independent Expert to continue to work with international institutions, donors and the international community to raise their awareness of the need to provide their expertise and appropriate resources to support the efforts of the Haitian authorities to rebuild the country and pursue sustainable development;

11. The Council also encourages the Independent Expert to continue to work with the Government of Haiti, non-governmental organizations of Haiti and civil society in Haiti. It invites the Government of Haiti to continue its active cooperation with civil society;

12. The Council invites the Independent Expert to assist the Government of Haiti in acting upon his own recommendations and those made by other special procedures, in particular those of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living and on the right to non-discrimination in this context;[2]

13. The Council also invites the Independent Expert to submit his report on the situation of human rights in Haiti to the Council at its twenty-eighth session. It further invites him to undertake a mission to Haiti and to report on that mission to the Council at its twenty-eighth session."

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[2] See A/HRC/25/54.